

Whose Valentine?

The Question Was Soon Settled

By CLARISSA MACKIE

"I don't see how Roger Brislin can look at Aunt Lou when"—Pretty Louise Arden always fussed and stopped when she reached this point in her oft repeated remark. In her own mind the real conclusion of the sentence was "when there is such a young and beautiful girl as I am in the same house." Of course you can see that Louise was only sixteen and very conceited or she never would have been guilty of such a remark. She was a sweet girl, though, and perhaps the years would broaden what now was a very narrow outlook on life.

"Why, Aunt Lou is thirty years old if she's a day," went on Louise.

Miss Lou Hayland was more than thirty years old. She was thirty-two, but nobody would have guessed it, because she retained all her girlish slimness of form and her graceful carriage of shoulders and poise of head. Miss Hayland had a wealth of deep chestnut hair that rippled from brow to nape of her white neck, and she had great violet eyes, with long, thick lashes and the most charming features in the world. Besides all this personal beauty, she had a sunny disposition and was sweet and amiable to the point of self sacrifice.

Her namesake, Louise, had watched her pretty aunt vanish down the snowy street tucked under the buffalo robes in Roger Brislin's sleigh, and it was a slight attack of jealousy that was responsible for the younger Louise's unkind remarks. She would have been proud to be Roger's companion, but it was Aunt Lou whom he chose to invite on every occasion, and people were beginning to say that Roger Brislin certainly meant business.

Louise dressed herself in a pretty gray chinchilla coat, in which she looked especially lovely, for she was a dark, sparkling beauty, with black eyes and brilliant color of cheek and lips. On her head she pinned a saucy gray hat with a scarlet wing, and, tucking her hands in her muff, she went down the street toward Homer Beckford's stationery store.

In front of the window she waited a long while, gazing at the handsome display of valentines in the two large windows. She intended to buy several to send anonymously to girl friends, but her bright eyes could not help but stray to the handsomest one in the window.

It was a large white satin affair with hand painted cupid and hearts upon it intertwined with wreaths of tiny roses. Beneath all this was a sentence, "I have waited for thee."

Louise sighed. She would have been happy indeed if she had received that valentine and known that Roger Brislin had sent it to her, for—yes, I must confess that Louise was almost in love with her charming aunt's admirer.

She slipped inside the store to make sure of something. Her romantic mind harbored the idea that possibly, by some freak of circumstance, Roger Brislin really did prefer her to her Aunt Lou, only he could not at this time break off with Miss Hayland. If this was the case and Roger was secretly nourishing a preference for Louise instead of Lou, then—then, concluded Louise, what was more natural than he should send her a beautiful valentine? He would no doubt select the most beautiful and costly one in Beckford's store, and that was the white satin beauty.

If she did receive the white satin valentine Louise would know from whence it came unless there happened to be more than one of the white ones in the store; then it might be from most anybody, for Louise Arden had several boyish admirers. She would go in and inquire now.

The store was empty of customers as she entered. Homer Beckford's son, young Homer, stood behind the counter looking over a tray of valentines and rearranging them in order, for it had been a busy afternoon. When he saw Louise coming in a little flush reddened his ears, and his light blue eyes sparkled. He was in love with pretty young Louise.

"Good afternoon, Homer," said Louise carelessly as she came up to the counter. "I want to inquire the price of that white satin beauty in the window."

"Five dollars, Louise," said Homer. "But you're too late—it's sold."

"Who bought it?" inquired Louise audaciously.

"You know I can't tell that."

"Not to me? I won't tell," urged Louise.

"I can't—don't ask me to. If it was anything except a valentine I might tell." Homer was looking much embarrassed and distressed over the matter—suspiciously so.

"Humph!" commented the displeased Louise as she walked down the store toward the show window. "I suppose I may look at it a moment. Any rule against that?"

"None at all," was Homer's cheerful reply, and he unhooked the white satin valentine from its place in the window and gave it into Louise's hands. She looked at it before and earnestly. She had seen it before—in fact, ever since it had been hung in the window—

and she had first cherished the hope that, after all, Roger Brislin might be suffering from a secret love for her and would send it to her under cover of the day dedicated to the sending of tender missives.

If the valentine was sold the name of the purchaser was probably traced on the back of the missive. If Homer would only turn his head the other way she would steal a glance at the reverse of the valentine and see whether Roger really was the purchaser. If his name was there it must be for her. He certainly would never dream of sending anything so sweetly romantic to a woman as old as Aunt Lou—an old maid!

"Will you please bring me a drink of water, Homer?" she asked prettily, and Homer hastened to obey her request. While he was gone she turned the valentine over and saw the word "Sold" and the initials "R. B." Her heart sang with joy.

When Homer Beckford returned Louise had replaced the valentine in the window and was looking over a trayful of less expensive ones. Her eyes sparkled with happiness, and she was very gracious to Homer Beckford, who felt exceedingly happy himself.

"You liked that white satin one, didn't you, Louise?" he asked as he wrapped her purchases.

"It is lovely," sighed Louise. "Is it the only one you've got?"

"Yes, the only one we had in stock like that. Father thought there wasn't any use in stocking up with many expensive ones, as there isn't much sale for them here in Bloomfield."

"I wouldn't mind receiving that one myself," hinted Louise as she left the store.

"Perhaps you will," called young Homer, and immediately ducked down beneath the counter to hide his embarrassment.

The following day would be St. Valentine's day. Louise was reading in the library when her Aunt Lou reached home just at dusk. Miss Hayland came into the room, looking very lovely in her dark blue velvet and fur. Her cheeks were delicately flushed, and her large violet eyes held a depth of feeling they had never displayed before.

Louise caught her breath as she realized her aunt's loveliness, and for a moment she felt very sorry to think of the tragedy that lay in store for Aunt Lou. She wondered if she ought not to probe her aunt's feelings concerning the matter and sort of pave the way for the denouement that must one day come when Aunt Lou discovered that Roger Brislin loved the beautiful young niece and not the handsome aunt.

"Well, pussie, you are snug and warm in here," smiled Aunt Lou, bending down to kiss her niece's cheek and then holding her own hands to the fire.

"Yes, Oh, Aunt Lou! Can you sit down a moment? I want to ask you a question. You will try to be calm and not break down, won't you?" urged her romantic niece.

"What is the matter? What has happened?" cried Miss Hayland in alarm, starting toward the door.

"Your mother!"

"It's not that sort of trouble, Aunt Lou!" cried Louise impatiently. "It's only—only—would you feel very badly if Roger Brislin really was eating his heart out for another girl—somebody quite young and beautiful—who—wouldn't help his talking in love with her?" Louise warmed to the subject. She felt like the heroine in a melodrama.

Miss Hayland grew very pale and leaned against the mantel. "What do you mean, Louise? What right have you to ask me such a question? What right have you to attack Mr. Brislin in that manner?"

Louise was frightened, and she turned her head away, and a sudden knock came around her mouth. "Of course you wouldn't believe it," she said significantly.

"No, I would not," said Miss Hayland with emphasis. "Look here, Louise, and she held out her slender left hand, on which gleamed a large diamond. 'I am engaged to be married to Mr. Brislin. You can understand why I must laugh at anything so ridiculous as you suggest.'"

"I'm very glad, I'm sure," said Louise stiffly and left the room after giving her aunt a cool kiss of congratulation. Later on she made up for her coldness by a delightful warmth. Now she was hurt and jealous and was anxious to seek the seclusion of her own room.

As she crossed the hall the door opened and her brother Dick entered with the evening mail. "A big valentine for you, Louise," he called and tossed her a square white package.

Despite his brotherly gibes she flew up to her room and tore open the wrappings. Inside was the white satin valentine. She turned it over. The initials had been erased, but she could see the faint indentation of the pencil marks. The first initial must have been an "R" instead of an "B."

Who was "R. B.?"

She asked herself this question as she went down the stairs, and her brother Dick answered it as he grinned up at her.

"You needn't try to make a secret of who sent you that valentine, sis, because I saw that big package of a Homer Beckford slipping it into the mail box just before they gave it to me!"

Louise sprang to the defense of Homer Beckford, and in that moment there died out the romance she had nurtured for Roger Brislin.

The white satin valentine had really come to her after all, and it bore a message of love that was more real than any unmagical feeling she might have for her aunt's lover.



The Lehigh Valley

To Buffalo and Niagara Falls

Your first glimpse of Wilkesbarre is from a height of twenty-four hundred feet—twelve miles away in an air line—nestling like a Swiss village in the valley below. And the scene shifts every minute.

The Black Diamond Express

High Noon from New York 12:30 p.m. from Philadelphia

gives you many a peep from a castle window as you sweep through the Blue Ridge range.

Lehigh Valley Railroad

"The Field-Glass Route"

Tickets and Time Tables: 160 Broadway, New York Reading Terminal, Philadelphia

HIDDEN HOARDS.

Fortunes Buried or Tucked Away in Wasteful Neglect.

None can estimate the wealth hidden in the days of the war between the states. Down mountain slopes, across the great plantations and along the streets of cities of the south are trails of lost fortunes. On the Mississippi river the shanty boatmen tell tales of kettles of gold coin and money that were buried in the brakes or revealed in the caving bank of the Mississippi by a cascade of coin rushing down the crumbling slope into the flood. Now and then some sharp darky appears with a handful of old gold.

A mathematician might estimate the quantity of nugget gold hidden by the placer miners, the loggers, tinkers, tramps, soldiers—all the kinds of fortunes that are tucked away in useless and wasteful neglect in all parts of the country—in stockings, mattresses, old clothes, garrets, cellars, hollow trees, hovels, mansions, caches of desperadoes and hidings of foreigners. If only one in 10,000 hides \$100 that is never found, and in every village and town the proportion is larger, among farmers and back country people much larger, the loss will amount to \$800,000. The chances are that there is a hundred million dollars of hidden fortunes in this country now—gold, silver, precious stones and paper wealth. Many a farm, many a city property, goes into neglect and decay because the heirs never knew of it.—Raymond S. Spears in Harper's Weekly.

Mark Twain and the Ministry. Orion Clemens thought of the ministry, an ambition which his brother Sam shared with him for a time. Every mischievous boy has it, sooner or later—though not for the same reasons.

"It was the most earnest ambition I ever had," Mark Twain once remarked thoughtfully. "Not that I ever really wanted to be a preacher, but because it never occurred to me that a preacher could be damned. It looked like a safe job."—Albert Bigelow Paine in Harper's Magazine.

Old Wall Street. Wall street in the days when Washington was the first president of the United States, when Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr were rivals at the bar, was perhaps the most popular and populous thoroughfare in New York. It was so named because it followed the line of the city's first defensive stockade or "wall," and throughout its length were enacted many scenes that are part of the nation's larger history.—Christian Herald.

Didn't Get Even the Brick. "Did that man hand you a gold brick?"

"I should say not," answered the amateur financier. "He sold me an interest in the gold brick on credit and took a mortgage on that, together with everything else I owned. Then he called the loan and foreclosed the mortgage and took possession of the gold brick, along with the rest."—Washington Star.

The Power of Beauty. "Brown's wife is a beautiful woman, isn't she?"

"She surely is." "If I had a wife as beautiful as that she could buy me all the neckties she wanted to, and I'd wear 'em by gum!"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

BROWNING'S "SORDELLO."

Mystery of That "Colossal Derelict on the Ocean of Poetry."

The impenetrable nature of Robert Browning's "Sordello," published in 1840, "a colossal derelict on the ocean of poetry," as William Sharp terms it, has been the theme of many anecdotes. Tennyson declared, writes Lillian Whiting in "The Brownings—Their Life and Art," that there were only two lines in it—the opening and the closing ones—which he understood, and "they are both lies," he feelingly added.

Douglas Jerrold tackled it when he was just recovering from an illness and despairingly set down his inability to comprehend it to the probability that his mind was impaired by disease, and, thrusting the book into the hands of his wife, he entreated her to read it at once. He watched her breathlessly, and when she exclaimed, "I don't know what this means; it is gibberish," Jerrold exclaimed, "Thank God, I am not an idiot."

A French critic, Odysse Barot, quotes a passage where the poet says, "God gave man two faculties," and adds, "I wish while he was about it God had supplied another—namely, the power of understanding Mr. Browning." Mrs. Carlyle declared that she read "Sordello" attentively twice, but was unable to discover whether the title referred to "a man, a city or a tree."

SNAKES ARE USEFUL.

They Are a Check Upon the Lesser Reptiles of the Tropics.

What is the use of snakes? In their "going on their belly," the circumstance that so offended Bacon, lies one of their greatest uses, because that, together with their internal formation and external covering, enables them to penetrate where no larger carnivorous animal could venture, into dark and noisome morasses, bog jungles, swamps amid the tangled vegetation of the tropics, where swarms of the lesser reptiles, on which so many of them feed, would otherwise outbalance the harmony of nature.

Wondrously and exquisitely constructed for their habitat, they are able to exist where the higher animals could not, and, while they help to clear those inaccessible places of the lesser vermin, they themselves supply food for a number of the smaller mammals, birds, with many carnivorous birds, devour vast numbers of young snakes.

The hedgehog, weasel, ichneumon, rat, peccary, badger, goat, hog and an immense number of birds keep snakes within due limits, while the latter perform their part among the grain devouring and herbivorous lesser creatures.—Harper's Weekly.

Thinking While Asleep.

It is rather startling to hear that man thinks as intelligently asleep as awake, but no less an authority than Sir Arthur Mitchell admits that thinking is essential to life, says the Chicago Tribune. Thinking when we sleep may be different from when we are awake, but the process goes on just the same. Man cannot think unless he is alive, and he cannot be alive without thinking. Dreams are not as confused as we think. They become confused from the standpoint of memory, but are not from the point of the dream organ. Memory half plucked in trying to recall them makes dreaming seem confused. Dreams born under normal conditions are normal. It is only those that are created under abnormal conditions that are strange, for, as Cicero said: "It cannot be doubted the number of true dreams would be greater if we were to fall asleep in a better condition. Filling ourselves with wine and flesh obscures our dreams."

Hitch in the System.

A Boston tramp has begged reduced to a system. He has his regular customers. He knocked at the door of a house. The owner came out. As soon as he saw the tramp he said:

"Now, look here; last week I gave you a nickel to stay away for ten days, and here you are back again."

The tramp put his hand to his forehead and was lost in thought for several minutes. Then he said: "You are right, colonel. Your assessment does not come due for a week yet. When I get back to my counting room I'll pay off my head bookkeeper and discharge him. He has neglected to give you the proper credit on the ledger."—New York American.

Ant Strength.

An English scientist weighed a small ant and a dead grasshopper which it was dragging to its nest. The weight of the grasshopper was found to be sixty times greater than that of the ant. The force exerted by the ant in dragging the grasshopper along the road was therefore proportionately equal to that of a man weighing 150 pounds pulling a load of four and one-half tons or a horse of 1,200 pounds a load of thirty-six tons.

A Pleasing Sight.

"Yes, my son." "What is a popular uprising?" "Why, a popular uprising, my boy, is when every man in a street carries up and offers his seat when one lone woman enters the car."—Yonkers Statesman.

Attraction.

"What do you suppose attracted that dove eyed girl to such a man?" "I don't know unless it was because he was pigeon toed."—Exchange.

All men are equal the day they are one and the day they are buried.

BE IT EVER SO HUMBLE there's no place like the home bath for comfort, happiness and health. Modern sanitary plumbing places a complete bathroom within the means of the most modest income. Ask Johnstone, the plumber, about the cost. They are just as willing to install a bath and other essentials in a cottage as in a castle.

G. M. JOHNSTONE, Plumber, 47 Warren Street, Bloomfield, N. J. Telephone No. 1171-w



A WOMAN OF STYLE always likes to make her calls or do her shopping in a swell rig from the Bloomfield Livery Stable. It is so convenient and restful to travel around in soft cushioned comfortable carriage when she can get it at such an attractive price from the Bloomfield Livery Stable. Carriages for weddings and funerals a specialty.

BLOOMFIELD LIVERY STABLE, 33-35 Washington Street, Bloomfield, N. J. OPEN DAY AND NIGHT.

Telephone No. 145.

The Leading Duty

of a Trustee under a will is the conservation of the estate and its increase by investment and the accumulation of surplus income.

In the discharge of such duties as this it is evident that a Trust Company stands in a much more advantageous position to advance and protect the interests of an estate than any individual can.

In the important work of collecting moneys of an estate, for instance, such an institution is better qualified and more successful than individuals.

Fidelity Trust Company, NEWARK, N. J.,

with its strong and complete organization affords resources through the Trust Department which cannot profitably be ignored by any man of property who wishes to leave his estate in competent and skilful hands.

"Come in and talk it over"

C. N. PHELPS
cabinet making
furniture repairing
and refinishing
number 270
Phone 1609
Bloomfield, N. J.
PHELPS Upholstering and Mattress Renovating
S. C. I. H. C.

Ballantine's India Pale Ale
ON DRAUGHT AND IN BOTTLES EVERYWHERE
BOTTLED AT THE BREWERY
BREWERY, NEWARK, N. J.